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SUMMARY OF THE ARCHEOLOGY OF SAGINAW VALLEY, MICHIGAN—II

By HARLAN I. SMITH

SAGINAW RIVER VALLEY

BAY COUNTY

Saginaw River.—The History of Saginaw County¹ states that “the water courses of the district comprise the Sac-haw-ning, or home of the Sacs. . . .”

Tchigaiinibewin Village Site.—The History of Saginaw County (p. 592, ¶ 2) states that “it must also be remembered that the Great Camp, or Kipayshowink [Ka-pay-shaw-wink], of these wandering bands did not hold the same position in summer as in winter, so that he who relies upon Indian legends simply, and without further inquiry, might associate the summer camp on the lake shore with the winter camp of the interior. Both were great camps; . . . the second, or summer camp, was north of Nesh-ko-ta-younk; . . . [and] the first in coming down from the lake. In winter the Bay-shore camp was called Tchigaiinibewin by travelers as being ‘close by’ the great camp, and in summer a reversal of terms was simply used to denote that the upper camp was the place ‘close by.’”

Nesh-ko-ta-younk Village Site.—The History of Saginaw County (p. 592) states that the “summer camp [Tchigaiinibewin], was north of Nesh-ko-ta-younk.”

McCormick Mound.—W. R. McCormick,² referring to the Water Street mound, wrote as follows:

¹ Page 288, ¶ 2.

² *Hist. Sag. Co.*, p. 284, ¶ 3, second part; and ¶ 4, p. 285. McCormick, “Mounds,” p. 381, ¶ 1, 2, and 3, gives the same information, with the exception

"Some thirty rods below, on Water street, between Twenty-second and Twenty-third streets, is an elevation, the highest on the river, on which is located the Bay City brewery, Barney hotel, the residence of W. R. McCormick and other residences, comprising nearly two acres. I wish to describe this elevation as I saw it, in a state of nature, over forty-five years ago. For many years it was considered to be a natural elevation of the land, but subsequent excavations have proved it to have been constructed by some remote race of people.

"When I first became acquainted with the location it was covered with a dense growth of timber, with the exception of the mound and about an acre and a half in the rear of it, *where* [from which] the earth was taken *from* to build the mound. It was then a duck pond, with water three feet deep, grown up with alder bushes. In grading Twenty-second street through the north end of *the* [this] mound, some years since, we found at a depth of 11 feet three skeletons of very large stature with large earthen pots at the head of each. In excavating for the cellar of the Bay City brewery, we found at the depth of four feet the remains of Indians in a good state of preservation, with high cheek bones and receding forehead, while, below these again, at the depth of four or five feet, the remains of a more ancient race, of an entirely different formation of skull, and with those burned stone implements and pottery were found. I have been unable to preserve any of these skulls, as they crumbled to dust when exposed to the air. I found one skeleton in a sitting position,

of the parts here in italics and with the addition of the matter here in brackets, McCormick (W. R.), "Mounds and Mound-Builders of the Saginaw Valley." By W. R. McCormick, of Bay City. Pp. 379-383. *Pioneer Collections*, Vol. IV [1881]. Lansing: W. S. George & Co., 1883. 8°.

W. R. McCormick, according to *Hist. Sag. Co.*, pp. 180-192, was born in 1822, removed from Albany, N. Y., to the present site of Flint, Genesee Co., Michigan, in 1832, later moved to Portsmouth, Bay Co., Michigan, and finally lived in Bay City. He was the first inhabitant of Saginaw valley to make any permanent archeologic records. Author of various items in *Hist. Sag. Co.*, pp. 117-120, 282-287, and 'Mounds' above noted.

facing the west, with a very narrow head, and long, as if it had been compressed. I laid it aside in hopes to preserve it, but in a few hours it had crumbled to pieces.

"This mound is full of the remains of ancient pottery and small stones that have been through the action of fire. A friend of mine found an awl made of copper which was quite soft with the exception of about an inch from the point which was so hard that a file would scarcely make an impression on it. This seems to me to show that the Mound-Builders had the art of hardening copper."

The use of the word "race" instead of "tribe" is probably a mistake in nomenclature, since the author evidently did not refer to the early European explorers or settlers. The statement that skeletons of very large size were found is probably due to misjudgment. Such remarks are commonly heard in the folklore repeated to explorers throughout the region.

It is still possible that this site is a natural hill in which were graves, and that the "duck pond" was also natural and not the source of the material of which the mound was made. Many of the hills in this region are formed by the wind and are increased and decreased by the same means. This would satisfactorily account for burials at different depths.

Fragile bones that would crumble on exposure to the direct rays of the sun, or even to dry air, may often be preserved without the use of other means than by wrapping in paper and boxing quickly so as to retain the moisture and allow them to dry slowly enough to become hard without warping.

While the narrow skull, described by Mr McCormick, may have been a case of post-mortem deformation due to pressure of the soil, it may more probably have been the skull of the rarer of two types, since not only the Sauk and Ojibwa have inhabited the region, but the Potawatomi and other tribes have visited it; and again, two forms of crania have been found elsewhere in this valley.¹

¹ See Fobear Mound No. 1, under Saginaw County.

The statement that part of the point of the awl was so hard that a file would scarcely make an impression on it is a fallacy probably derived from the feel and effect on the file of the thickly oxidized metal as compared with that of a clean piece of metallic copper.

The term "Mound-builders," as used by Mr McCormick, probably refers to a mysterious extinct people, whereas the word "Indians" would doubtless have been more suitable in this connection.

William McCormick¹ states that "in the vicinity of the residence of William R. McCormick, that being the highest land, and where they [the Sauk] had attempted to fortify themselves; . . . at the present time, by digging in this hill, you will find it full of human bones."

Mr McCormick,² referring to the mounds of Saginaw valley, states that "the plow has helped to level many of them, with the exception of the Fraser, Fitzhugh, and McCormick mounds. And to prove that the last three are artificial and not natural is the fact that in the rear of all these are low places, showing where the earth had been *taken from* [procured] to build the mounds. . . .

"Again, the soil on the mounds differs from the soil around them with the exception of the low places referred to from where the earth was taken; . . . And in no part of the valley will you find those relics except in those mounds."

The description of the varieties of soil is perhaps too arbitrary, and specimens such as are found in the mounds are found also on village sites.

Professor Thomas³ states that there is a "large artificial elevation on Water street, in Bay City, east side. . . . Described

¹ *Hist. Sag. Co.*, p. 118.

² *Hist. Sag. Co.*, p. 287, ¶ 1. McCormick, "Mounds," p. 383, ¶ 1-3, gives the same information with the exception of the parts here in italics and with the addition of the matter here in brackets.

³ Thomas, *Catalogue*, p. 107.

by W. K. McCormick, in Michigan Pioneer Collection, vol. 4 (1881), p. 382."

Water Street Mounds.—W. R. McCormick¹ wrote as follows: "On the Saginaw river, toward its mouth, when we come to what is now the corner of Twenty-fourth and Water streets in Bay City, where the Center House now stands, we find the old McCormick homestead. Here were two large mounds in the garden, which my father plowed and scraped down. They contained a number of skeletons, stone axes, knives, and quite an amount of broken pottery."

Professor Thomas² states that "two large mounds, now gone, stood on the east side of the Saginaw River, at the corner of Twenty-fourth and Water streets, Bay City. . . Described by W. K. McCormick, in Michigan Pioneer Collection, vol. 4 (1881), p. 382."

More Mound.—W. R. McCormick³ wrote as follows: "We will now pass over to the west side near the mill of More, Smith & Co. There was here, 45 years ago, a mound just above the mill about 100 feet across in a circular form and about three feet high. Originally it must have been much higher. I have never examined this mound, but have understood from old settlers that there were a great many stone implements found in it. The plow has nearly leveled it, so that it is scarcely noticed any more."

Professor Thomas states that "there was a mound on the west side, near the mill of M. Smith & Co." as "described by W. K. McCormick, in Michigan Pioneer Collection, vol. 4 (1881), p. 382."

¹ *Hist. Sag. Co.*, p. 284, ¶ 3, first part. McCormick, "Mounds," p. 380, ¶ 5, p. 381, first part.

² Thomas, *Catalogue*, p. 107.

³ *Hist. Sag. Co.*, p. 285, ¶ 1. McCormick, "Mounds," p. 381, ¶ 4, gives the same information with the exception of the parts here in italics and with the addition of the matter here in brackets.

⁴ Thomas, *Catalogue*, p. 107.

West Bay City Village Site.—On the sand ridge close to the river at West Bay City, where the railroad roundhouse is located, were found fragments of chert and burned stones in sufficient numbers to suggest that the place had been a village site.

West Bay City Graves.—In the West Bay City village site several human skeletons were dug out by the railroad section workmen, one of whom, on inquiry, reported the same. The place of these graves appeared to be a natural sand ridge in which interments had been made. This burial site may be identical with what Mr McCormick terms the Birney mound.

Birney Mound.—W. R. McCormick¹ wrote as follows: "The mound which was located near the west end of the Detroit & Bay City railroad bridge, [which] for reference I will call the Birney mound, as it is located on the lands of that great philanthropist, the late Hon. James G. Birney. This mound was not so large in circumference, but much higher than the one just noticed."²

"In this *were* [was] also found human bones, in a much better state of preservation than any of the rest. I procured from this mound a skull with a hole in it just above the temple bone, produced by a sharp instrument, which undoubtedly caused death. This skull I presented to J. Morgan Jennison, of Philadelphia. It was of an entirely different formation from the Indian skull of the present day, as it did not have their high cheek bones nor their receding forehead, but a very intellectually developed head, showing that it was of a different race of people from the Indian. Some years since some boys were digging in the side of the mound, as they had often done before, to get angle-worms for fishing, when they came across a small silver canoe, about five inches long. *A* [, and *a*] gentleman who was fishing with them,

¹ *Hist. Sag. Co.*, p. 285, ¶ 2, p. 286. McCormick, "Mounds," p. 381, ¶ 5, and p. 382, ¶ 1, gives the same information with the exception of the parts here in italics and with the addition of the matter here in brackets.

² Refers to the More mound "about 100 feet across . . . and about three feet high."

offered them 50 cents for it, which they accepted. After cleaning it up, he found it to be of exquisite workmanship, with the projecting ends tipped with gold. [[Query.—Was not this a present from some early Catholic missionary of whom history makes no mention?]] A rough copper kettle of peculiar shape and make, having been wrought into shape by hammering, without any seam, was also taken from one of *these* [those] mounds, and is now in the State capitol amongst Mr. [O. A.] Jenison's [Jennison's] collections of *antiquities* [antiquity ']."

On August 28, 1890, Mr McCormick told the writer that the hole in the skull above mentioned may have been made as a post-mortem religious custom. Regarding the remarks concerning the shape of the skull, it must be remembered that, at the time Mr McCormick wrote, exact somatologic methods were unknown in his section, and the great difference in the shape of the skull from that of the others found (unless the skull were that of a Caucasian, possibly an early French voyageur) was probably exaggerated owing to lack of familiarity with crania. The word "race," in this connection as in others, is used indiscreetly by the author.

The silver canoe may have been introduced after the first contact with the early French traders. It suggests that the burial was comparatively recent.

The Birney mound may have been merely a natural sand ridge in which there were graves, and possibly is identical with the site of the West Bay City graves.

Professor Thomas² states that "a mound formerly stood near the west end of the Detroit and Bay City Railroad bridge, on land of James G. Birney. . . . Described by W. K. McCormick, in Michigan Pioneer Collection, vol. 4 (1881), p. 382."

Lynn Graves.—W. R. McCormick,³ referring to his preceding item about the Birney mound, wrote as follows: "The next

¹ [Unfortunately the Legislature declined to purchase this valuable collection, and it has been repossessed by Mr Jenison.]

² Thomas, *Catalogue*, p. 107.

³ *Hist. Sag. Co.*, p. 286, ¶ 1. McCormick, "Mounds," p. 382, ¶ 2.

mound was about half a mile up the river, and formerly stood in the center of Linn street, West Bay City, but has been graded down many years since. I was not there at the time, but was informed by others that it contained human bones and stone implements. Charles E. Jennison, a pioneer of Bay City, informs me that he dug up two skeletons many years ago in the side of this mound. He found with the skeletons two copper kettles, which he has still in his possession. I am inclined to think that these were not the remains of the original Mound-Builders, but a race of a subsequent period."

On August 28, 1890, Mr McCormick told the writer that the mound was fifty or sixty feet in diameter and twelve feet high. The copper kettles suggest that the bodies with which they were found were buried since the advent of the whites and that the site was a burial place in the sand knoll rather than a mound.

Professor Thomas¹ states that "another [referring to his preceding item about the Birney mound] stood half a mile up the river, same side [west], at what is now the centre of Lean street, west Bay City." He also mentions that copper kettles were found and that the information was derived from W. K. McCormick, in Michigan Pioneer Collection, vol. 4 (1881), p. 382.

Fitzhugh Graves.—W. R. McCormick,² referring to his preceding item about the Lynn graves, wrote as follows: "We now proceed a half-mile more up the river, to the rise of ground in the rear of Frank Fitzhugh's grist-mill. This elevation, 45 years ago, when I first saw it, was the most picturesque spot on *the* Saginaw river. Here was also a beautiful spring of cold water, and was a favorite camping ground of the Indians. It was also, according to the Indian tradition, the original site of the Sauk village, and where the great battle was fought when the

¹ Thomas, *Catalogue*, p. 107.

² *Hist. Sag. Co.*, p. 286, ¶ 2. McCormick, "Mounds," p. 382, ¶ 3 and 4, gives the same information with the exception of the parts here in italics and the addition of the matter here in brackets.

Chippewas exterminated that nation.¹ This I will call the Fitzhugh mound, as it is on the lands of Frank Fitzhugh. [¶] This elevation, comprising two or three acres, was always thought to be natural; but I am satisfied from recent excavations, and a low place to the southwest, that the earth has been taken from this point to raise the mound higher than the surrounding land, and that it is, therefore, mostly artificial. Then again, the land adjoining on the north is a yellow sand, while on the south the land fell off abruptly, and is composed of the same kind of soil as the mound, black sand and loam, from where the earth was taken. I am now speaking of this mound as it appeared 45 years ago. Since then the railroad company have excavated a part of it for ballasting *up* their road, and many other excavations and alterations have taken place, so that it has not the same appearance it had when I first saw it. Some years since Mr Fitzhugh, or the village authorities of Wenona, now West Bay City, excavated a street through this mound, which brought to light many relics, and proved beyond a doubt that this eminence was a mound built in remote ages. A great many skeletons were exhumed, together with a great many ornaments of silver, broken pottery, stone implements, etc., and, like the McCormick mound on the opposite side of the river, was full of broken stone which had been through the action of fire."

The site is probably a sand ridge, with graves in it and a natural pond near it. The ornaments of silver were doubtless the traders' ornaments commonly found in the region and suggest that the graves were made since the advent of the whites.

On August 28, 1890, Mr W. R. McCormick informed the writer that this mound was oblong and covered an acre and a half.

Mr McCormick,² referring to the mounds of Saginaw valley, states that "the plow has helped to level many of them, with the

¹ See footnote 2, p. 287, *American Anthropologist*, 1901.

² *Hist. Sag. Co.*, p. 287, ¶ 1. McCormick, "Mounds," p. 383, ¶ 1-3, gives the same information with the exception of the parts here in italics and with the addition of the matter here in brackets.

exception of the Fraser, Fitzhugh and McCormick mounds. [¶] And to prove that the last three are artificial and not natural is the fact that in the rear of all these are low places, showing where the earth had been *taken from* [procured] to build the mounds, . . . [¶] Again, the soil on the mounds differs from the soil around them with the exception of the low places referred to from where the earth was taken; . . . And in no part of the valley will you find those relics except in those mounds."

The statement regarding the varieties of soil is perhaps too arbitrary, and specimens such as are found in the mounds are found also on village sites.

Professor Thomas¹ states that there is "half a mile farther up the river, on same side, [referring to his preceding item about the Lynn graves, west side,] an artificial excavation back of Frank Fitzhugh's gristmill, now considerably disfigured. Many relics [were] found [in it]. Described by W. K. McCormick, in Michigan Pioneer Collection, vol. 4 (1881), p. 382."

Fitzhugh Village Site.—W. R. McCormick,² referring to his preceding item about the Lynn graves, wrote as follows: "We now proceed a half-mile more up the river, to the rise of ground in the rear of Frank Fitz-hugh's grist-mill. This elevation, 45 [forty-five] years ago, when I first saw it, was the most picturesque spot on *the* Saginaw river. Here was also a beautiful spring of cold water, and was a favorite camping ground of the Indians; it was also, according to the Indian tradition, the original site of the Sauk village, and where the great battle was fought when the Chippewas exterminated that nation."³

William McCormick⁴ states that "the main village of the Sauks stood on the west side of the Saginaw river, just below where the residence of Mr Frank Fitzhugh now is, and opposite

¹ Thomas, *Catalogue*, p. 107.

² *Hist. Sag. Co.*, p. 286, ¶ 2. McCormick, "Mounds," p. 382, ¶ 3.

³ See footnote 2, p. 287, *American Anthropologist*, 1901.

⁴ *Hist. Sag. Co.*, p. 117, ¶ 3.

the mill of the Hon. N. B. Bradley." He further states¹ that on the west side of the river the main village of the Sauks was located, across the river from another village (the Portsmouth village site) "which stood near where the court-house now stands, near the ferry, in Portsmouth."

Portsmouth Village Site.—William McCormick² states that, across the river from the main village of the Sauk, there was "another village, which stood near where the court-house now stands, near the ferry, in Portsmouth."

West Bay City Mound.—On August 28, 1890, Mr W. R. McCormick informed the writer that on the west side of Saginaw river, near Peter Smith's mill, in the first ward of West Bay City, there was a very high sacrificial mound of conical form.

Sagenong Village Site.—William McCormick,³ referring to Skull island, states that "just below this locality . . . lies Sag-e-nong, upon a high bank on the west side of the river. This is the Saginaw of the red man, and the only place known to him by that name. The meaning of the word is the 'land of Sauks.' The place known to the white men as Saginaw lies 12 miles or more up the river, and is called Ka-pay-shaw-wink."

Skull Island Graves.—William McCormick⁴ relates that "Skull Island, which is the next island above what is now Stone's Island . . . [is] known as 'Skull Island,' from the number of skulls found on it." He further relates⁵ that "about 12 miles below Saginaw City is 'Skull Island,' so named by the Indians in consideration that upon it exists an endless quantity of 'dead heads,' which were left here after a great fight, years long past, between the Chippewas and Sauks, . . . christening . . . about two acres of Bad Island." The approximate date is given:⁶ "1520—Massacre of the Sauks by the Otchipwes." The writer has found no place named "Bad Island" or "Skull Island" on

¹ *Hist. Sag. Co.*, p. 118.

² *Ibid.*, p. 118.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 120, ¶ 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 120, ¶ 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 474.

any map and suspects that the former term, at least, was used descriptively in that instance only and was perpetuated by typographic error in capitalization.

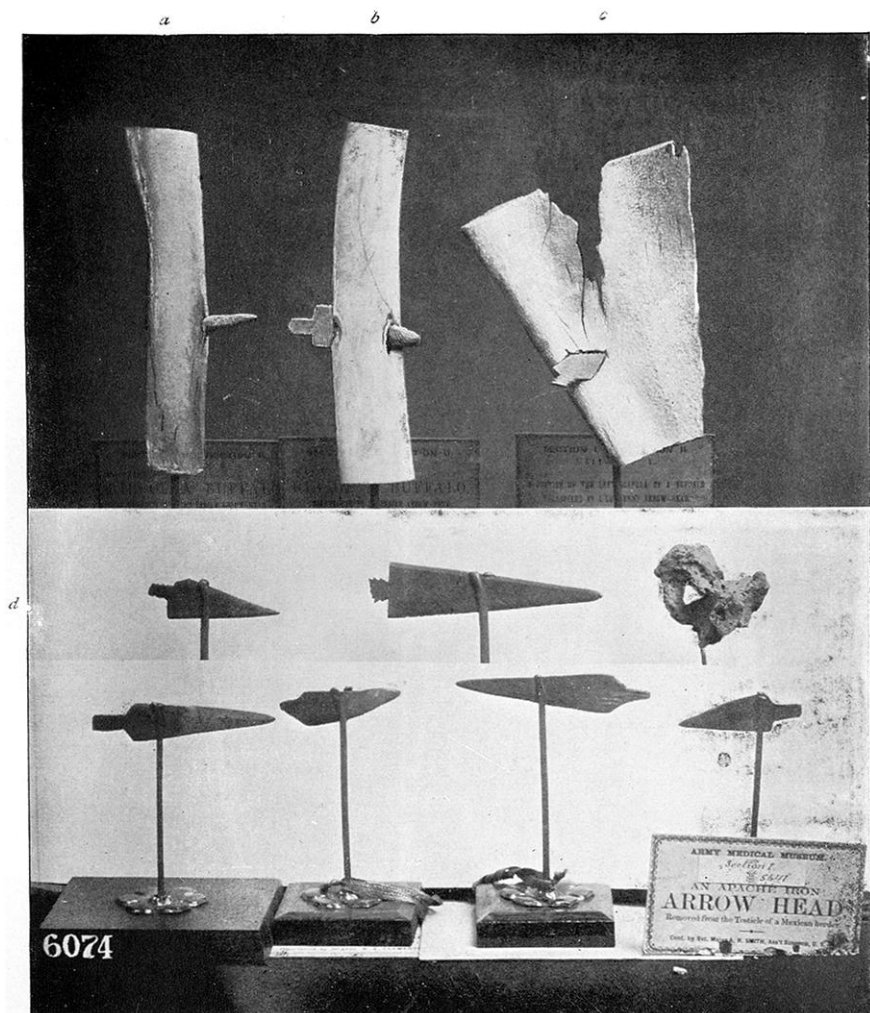
Syuaconning Creek. — The “ Map of Saginaw and Tuscola, with part of Genesee, Lapeer, Huron & Midland Counties. Michigan,”¹ gives the name Syuaconning to the creek given on the map accompanying the History of Saginaw County as Syaaquanning creek. The History (p. 289) also refers to it as “Squa-hawning, or Last Battle river,” and it states (p. 290) that “Squahauning creek (south branch) rises in the township of Kotchville, and flowing northeasterly enters the Saginaw river about six miles from the mouth.”

Cheboyganine Creek. — The History of Saginaw County (p. 289) gives the name of this creek as “Che-boy-gun” and states (p. 290) that “Cheboy creek rises in Tuscola county, and flowing in a northwesterly direction, through the townships of Blumfield, Buena Vista and Zilwaukee, enters the Saginaw above Bay City.”

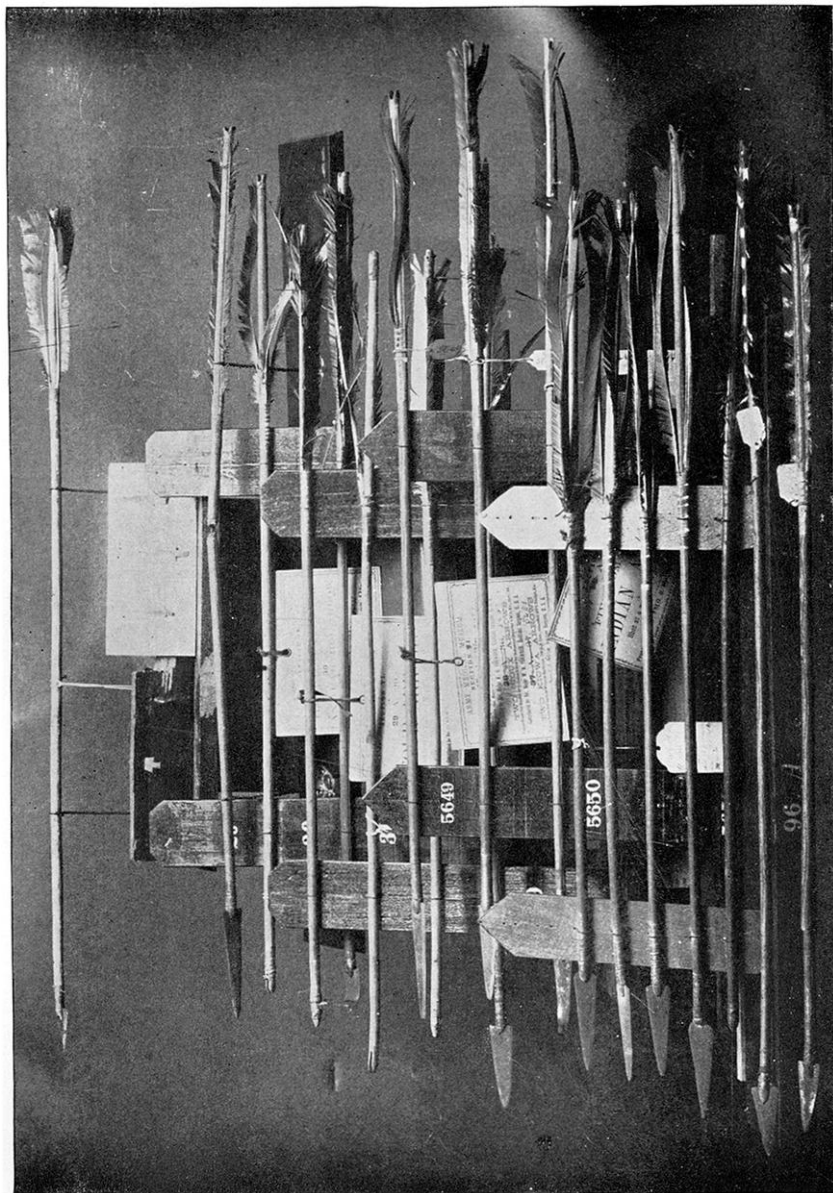
¹ Published by D. A. Pettibone. Bridgeport Center, Michigan. Lythographed printed and mounted by J. H. Colton & Co. New York. Copyrighted 1858.



ANCIENT HUMAN BONES PENETRATED BY ARROWPOINTS OR SPEARHEADS. CAVERN, KENTUCKY



a, *b*, *c*, Portions of rib and shoulder-blade of buffalo transfixed by iron arrows fired by Indians in the chase (Army Med. Mus., cat. 4735, 4736, 4737). *d*, Hoop-iron arrowhead withdrawn from brain of United States soldier nine days after being wounded in attack by Apaches.



INDIAN ARROWS USED IN ACTUAL WARFARE; MOSTLY REMOVED FROM WOUNDS BY OPERATING SURGEONS. (ARMY MEDICAL MUSEUM).